

Jones. (J. E.)

1868.

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HOMŒOPATHY

AND

ITS PRACTITIONERS

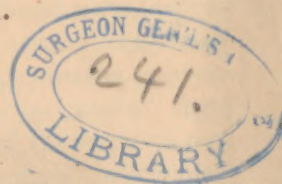
IN

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA,

BY

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Homœopathy,

And Its Practitioners in Chester County, Pa.,

MAY, 1868.

It is but current report that early as the year 1835, one Dr. Caspari settled in Chester county, at a place then called Prestonville, now named West Grove. He is said to have been well versed in the tenet of Similia, and was the pioneer practitioner in this county. If the memory of my informer is correct, he remained but about one year, which short stay proved that his acceptance was not universal. Dr. Caspari now resides in Louisville, Ky. From the year 1835 to the year 1840 we cannot discover that the great principle of Homœopathy had a single representative in the county. A few throughout the district had heard from distant parts, especially the cities of Philadelphia and New York, of its wonderful cures of cases abandoned by other physicians as hopeless, and still fewer had secretly assayed its merits. Here and there, over the county, could be heard the wonders produced by the power of the little pills contained in a domestic medicine chest. It was not until the year 1840, that a Homœopathic physician located permanently within the borders of Chester county. Dr. Robert May, in that year, settled in the extreme Northern part of the county, in Warwick township, near Warwick Furnace. Dr. May had been a practitioner of Allopathic medicine, in former years, at the same place. It was the first spot he selected in Chester

county after his graduation at the University of Pennsylvania in 1822, having been the private student of Dr. Thomas Davis, of this county. Soon tiring of that mode of practice, he says: "I ceased to use calomel and the lancet, and finally gave up altogether, being fully convinced of its absurdities. I used for a short time after this Thompsonian or the Botanic practice, but I also gave this up. I then took a trip to the West. After my return, I heard of the system of Homœopathy, and I determined to inquire into its truthfulness. Accordingly I went to the city (of Philadelphia), and visited Dr. Williamson and others. I purchased books and medicines, and ever since have been an *earnest advocate* of its truths." How long Dr. May remained at Warwick I can find no record. During his residence there he called meetings of the inhabitants, and lectured on the subject. The progress of the new system was very rapid, and many staunch friends were made. During his residence here, he married. About two years after his wedlock, he moved from Warwick to North Coventry township, four miles from Pottstown, at which place he remained until the day of his death, enjoying the confidence of all around him, and the profits of a large practice. It is said that in the latter years of his life, when he was enfeebled by disease, his wife interested herself in his profession, and was of very material aid to him. This venerable disciple of Hahleman lived to the good old age of 72, dying on the 26th day of January, 1867. Dr. May was a successful practitioner. In the Summer of 1853 an epidemic of dysentery swept the whole country around him. He attended 73 cases, lost but two, both of these quite young children. At another time Diptheria raged so fearfully that out of five families, in as many miles, 19 children and some adults died. He says: "I took the alarm, and commenced prescribing the iodide of mercury (as a prophylactic). Its effects were astonishing. I think I must have given it to 200 children, only three of whom took the diptheria, after taking the preventative, two of them very

lightly; the other, under the influence of *strong* medicine, died." He closes his interesting letter by saying, with emphasis: "*I use no other than Homœopathic medicine, and that in small doses.*" Much honor is due to his memory.

In the Spring of the year 1841, J. Stuart Leech, after studying medicine in Pittsburgh, graduated at the Jefferson College, in Philadelphia. He settled in the Fall of the same year as a practitioner of Allopathic medicine in the pleasant little village of Downington, located on the Pennsylvania Railroad, thirty miles from Philadelphia. During the first or second winter, Dr. Leech was thrown into the society of Mr. William Downing, who but recently had been made a true friend to Homœopathy by the cure, under that system, of a much loved daughter, after the local physicians had entirely failed. One evening Dr. Leech, coming to his house, made the remark: "Well, old Mother Juniper must die to-night or to-morrow." [The one spoken of was a very old negress, suffering from asthma, who lived on a hill back of the town, and who had been turned over to the young M. D. by three old physicians, as a hopeless case.] "Then," said Mr. D., "why not try some Homœopathic remedies? It can do no harm, can it?" The Dr. acknowledged he thought it could do no harm, but knew it could do no good. After some persuasion, he was induced to prescribe some pellets of Arsenicum from Mr. Downing's domestic case. He gave her half the contents of the bottle during the night, and the aggravation nearly killed the poor woman, but the next day she was better, and, to the astonishment of all, she perfectly recovered. This was the starting point of the practice of Homœopathy in Downington. Dr. Leech returned to Philadelphia, gaining all the information he possibly could on the subject, and returned to Downington in 1842, to use it in his daily rounds. He and the new system soon grew in favor. For many miles on either side he swept the practice of one of the finest vallies of the State, inhabited by people of such education, intellect and wealth as are not usu-

ally found in agricultural districts. Homœopathy in and around Downington is popular, and, in spite of tremendous difficulties surrounding it, has progressed rapidly.

Until the year 1846 there was no further increase in the number of Homœopathic practitioners. This year Dr. Geo. C. Williams settled as a pioneer in West Chester. He attempted and did eventually break up a stiff old Allopathic sod. The ploughshare of medical truth entered slowly at first, but soon the mighty power of Similia turned a deep and lasting furrow. Dr. Geo. C. Williams was the son of Rev. Thomas Williams, of one of the New England States, was a student of Boudoin College, and of Homœopathy, under Dr. Small, of Philadelphia, but never graduated in Homœopathy until the year 1850, doing so then at the Homœopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania. Shortly after his settlement in West Chester, so rank became the growth of antagonism that it budded and brought forth a good-sized pamphlet against this mysterious innovation. Dr. Wilmer Worthington, at the instigation of the Allopathic Medical Society of Chester county, produced the usual tirade of abuse and misrepresentation, so common to all, that it would be useless to repeat even his headings. Many who looked on supposed it would stop forever the progress of medical truth. Alas, for the weakness of the opposition! By its own obesity it died the usual death of such monstrosities. It killed itself. Very few noticed it; but many looked into the new principle so constantly abused, tried it for themselves, and believed it from their experience. From that day the seed grew rapidly, and although it fell among thorns, it could not be choked, but brought forth fruit a hundred fold. Nothing changed the even tenor of the way of Homœopathy in its progress, with Dr. Williams as its sole professional representative in West Chester, until the year 1854. About the year 1852 James B. Wood commenced the study of Homœopathic medicine with Dr. G. C. Williams. Graduating in the Spring of 1854 at the Homœopathic College of Pennsyl-

vania, he purchased the interest of Dr. G. C. Williams, and settled in his place, Dr. Williams having removed to Philadelphia. Dr. Wood's success was similar to that of Dr. Williams. His conversion to Homœopathy was made while he was a layman, from seeing the prompt effect of its remedies on one of his own family, after a continued trial of several of the most distinguished Allopathists had signally failed. He says: "The relief under our system was prompt and permanent."

In the Spring of 1858 Dr. Joseph E. Jones settled as a practitioner of Homœopathy in West Chester. From the year 1853 he had been the private student of Dr. Joseph Carson, Professor of Materia Medica in the University of Pennsylvania, and graduated at that institution in the Spring of 1856. Immediately after he received the appointment of Resident Physician to the Philadelphia General Hospital and Children's Asylum. During his residence here he became dissatisfied with the success of the practice used there, and longed for something more certain in its effects and less painful to the patient. An epidemic of scarlet fever in the Children's Asylum did not lessen that desire. After leaving the Hospital, he devoted a year to the study and practice of Homœopathy. He became convinced of its superiority, and accepted its tenets. In the Spring of 1858, as before said, he settled in West Chester, and joined in the general success. In his conversion to Homœopathy, the cure of three diseases were prominent, namely: that of Membranous croup, of Hip Disease, and the backening of Quinsey, when it had progressed to supuration. They were convincing cases.

There remained but two Homœopathic physicians in West Chester until March of 1863, when Dr. R. C. Smedley removed from Oxford to that place. He being the first occupant of the professional field at Oxford, his history will justly come when mentioning that district. About the same year, 1863, Dr. George C. Williams returned to West Chester, and assayed to establish himself again, after an absence

of nine years; but not succeeding equal to his desires, he removed to Coatesville in 1866. In 1867 Dr. Henry C. Wood, son of Dr. J. B. Wood, graduated at the Homœopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, and settled with his father in West Chester.

The next district, in the chronological order of which we have positive data, is New London. Dr. Henry Duffield was its first practitioner in our faith. He graduated at the Homœopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania in the year 1852, and settled in Philadelphia. In 1854 he removed from Philadelphia to New London, having just buried his wife. He did not desire to regularly practice, but would see those in his immediate neighborhood, when desired, which, in a short time, made him sought after by so many, that he entered into a general practice. The Doctor remained in the vicinity of New London until the year 1862, when, in February of that year, he removed to Oxford, to take the place vacated by Dr. Smedley, removing hence. At Oxford Dr. Duffield remained until his death, which was on the 5th day of December, 1865, at the age of 65. A just tribute to his memory will be found in the *Hahnemannian Monthly*, page 429, Vol. I. The Doctor was a man estimable in character, accomplished in manner, and venerated for his goodness of heart. Homœopathy lost a faithful and ardent disciple when he died.

It was but a year after the occupation of New London by Dr. Duffield, that Kennett Square was settled by Dr. L. D. Johnston. March 4th, 1852, he graduated at the Homœopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, and in April of 1855 commenced practice. He has made no change in location, and by diligence in business has built up a large and lucrative practice. He has been called many "hard names," and most grossly misrepresented; yet it has all conduced to his permanency and success. In 1861 he writes: "The progress of Homœopathy in this community has been rapid from the first, and everywhere I find a deep and abiding interest felt

in the cause." Dr. Johnston still holds steady to his faith and post.

It was about this same year, 1855, or the one following, that Dr. L. B. Hawley settled in Phoenixville, although it is said that T. J. Weed, (during the late rebellion an officer on General Lane's staff, and now in Kansas), was located there, and made the first break for our great principle of Similia. We cannot ascertain when it was, or how long he remained there. Dr. Hawley followed him, and remained in Phoenixville until the latter part of 1862, or the beginning of 1863, when he removed to Kinderhook, New York. Dr. Hawley's success in Phoenixville was decided. Through the town he was popular and successful. It is believed that he was a graduate of the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, but of what year is not known. It was while Dr. Hawley was still at Phoenixville, that Dr. Orlando S. Wood settled there. Dr. Wood was a private student of Dr. Joseph E. Jones, of West' Chester, and graduated in March, 1860, at the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, and went directly to the above-named place in April, 1860, where he remained about a year, whence he moved, in 1861, to Canandaigua, New York. At the latter place Dr. Wood remained only till 1866, when, on account of his health giving way to the character of the climate, he removed to Philadelphia, in which city he now resides. The place left by Dr. O. S. Wood was vacant from 1861 until Dr. Alban Williams located there in November, 1863. Dr. Williams now holds the territory, with a very successful practice, gaining influence constantly. Among the iron manufacturers there the practice is deservedly popular. Dr. Williams thus gives his own professional history:—
 "In the Spring of 1849 I began the study of Allopathy, under an aged, able and experienced practitioner. Studied five years, while teaching school; but the longer I studied, and the farther I examined into the "regular" system of medicine, the more I became disgusted with the routine

method of drugging and poisoning the human system. I at once resolved that if I could not find a more rational, scientific and humane method of treatment, I must abandon the idea altogether. I then at once sought Homœopathic books, and placed myself temporarily under the advice of Dr. Charles V. Dare, then of Chester, Pa. After two years' study of Homœopathy, and two courses of lectures at the Homœopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, I graduated at that institution in the Spring of 1858, and immediately settled in practice in Woodstown, N. J. In the Fall of 1862, (October), I received a commission from Gov. Olden, of New Jersey, as Surgeon of the 24th Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, for nine months, during which time I was absent in active service in Virginia. Returned home, on the expiration of my term of service, in June, 1863. In the Fall of the same year, (Nov., 1863), I settled in Phoenixville, Chester county, where I have been practicing the good old 'Hahnemanian doctrine of Similia' ever since. My success here has been good, exceeding my anticipations."

In the year 1854 Coatesville was made a colony to Homœopathy, under the leadership of Dr. D. R. Bardin, from whom we will receive his own account. He writes, in 1861: "I graduated at the University of New York City, on the 8th of March, 1848, and settled here (in Coatesville), to practice medicine, in October following. I commenced with all confidence in the Old School of medicine, and thought Homœopathy a great humbug, &c. I continued to practice Allopathic medicine for six years. During that time I learned, to my entire satisfaction, that there was no science in the Old School; in fact, I had lost all confidence in it, as a System, and had concluded to abandon the profession, and turn my attention to some other business. But, before doing so, I would investigate the Homœopathic system of medicine; and, accordingly, I bought Hull's *Jahr*, and a few other works on Homœopathy, together with a case of medicines, and some of the leading remedies, in the

form of the mother tinctures. I soon became interested in it, as a system of medicine, and introduced it into my practice; and, fortunately, some of the first patients treated by it were attended with great success, and thus confirming my belief in it as a science; and I at once found a guiding principle in giving medicine, which I sought for in the Old School, but found not. I had a moderate business while I practiced the Allopathic system, but soon after I introduced the New School of medicine, my business increased very fast, and now it is not too much to say that two-thirds, or three-fourths of the families, within four or five miles of this place, are Homoeopathic."

Dr. Bardin remained in Coatesville until the Fall of 1866, when he disposed of his interest to Dr. George C. Williams, and moved to West Philadelphia, where he is now practicing. About the year 1858, James L. Scott commenced the study of Homoeopathic medicine with Dr. Bardin, in Coatesville. Graduating at the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania in March of 1860, he immediately located in Coatesville. Here he remained until January 1st, 1866, enjoying a profitable and growing practice. At intervals he made two voyages across the Atlantic to Liverpool, as surgeon of a clipper-ship. After this he settled in Hackensack, New Jersey, and remained there, liked and admired by nearly all, until the Fall of 1867, when he returned temporarily to Coatesville, and soon became sought for as a medical attendant. He still remains there. In August of 1867, Harry E. Williams settled in Coatesville as a practitioner of Homoeopathy, having been the pupil of Dr. J. E. Kent, of Philadelphia. He graduated at the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania in March, 1866, locating himself as above noted, after he had remained about a year in Philadelphia. He joins the rest in the usual progress.

It must have been between the year 1854 and 1857, (there are no specific dates), that Dr. William Downing changed his mode of practice from Allopathy to Homoeopathy. He

has been located variously from Downingtown to Chester Springs, mostly at Lionville, Windsor or Milford, and enjoyed an advantage over his Allopathic brethren by his faith in "Similia." Since his adoption of that principle, there has been no cessation of his success.

At the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, in March, 1857, Dr. D. R. Hindman graduated, and then located in the new field in Cochranville, where he remained, making many converts to his faith, until the year 1865, when he moved to the West, and entered an unusually successful practice in Marion, Iowa. In 1861 Dr. Hindman writes: "I have not had any severer persecution, more than the talk of the community at large. The progress of Homoeopathy is cheering. About two-thirds of my practice now is among those who were opposed to Homoeopathy when I first located here, four years ago." His place has been left vacant.

Since writing the above, I learn that Dr. P. E. Valentine was a practitioner in Cochranville, for about six or eight weeks, in the year 1846 or '47, but soon removed hence to Lexington, Ky. Also, Dr. Baker, now of Lancaster, Pa., was in the same place, for a short time, with good success.

Following the order of time, in the settlements of Homoeopathy, Oxford comes next. Dr. R. C. Smedley was its pioneer at that place, in the year 1860, having graduated at the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, in March of the same year. Dr. Smedley was the private student of Dr. J. P. Lewis, of Newtown, Delaware county, Pa., and becoming dissatisfied with the theory of Allopathy, turned his attention to the law of Similia, and soon recognized in it what he had desired to obtain. He soon relinquished the study of Allopathic works, and matriculated in the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, in the year 1858. The Doctor says: "While in Philadelphia, I placed myself under the immediate instructions of Dr. J. G. Howard, and graduated in March, 1860. On the 10th of June, of the same year, I located in Oxford, in the southern part of Ches-

ter county, and pioneered the way for Homoeopathy in that place, the system being unknown, except to a few individuals." Dr. Smedley remained at Oxford two years and nine months, when he removed to West Chester, in March of 1863, at which place he is doing a good share of business with the rest. As before noted, Dr. Duffield followed Dr. Smedley at Oxford, remaining there until he died, December, 1865. There was no practitioner of Homoeopathy in the Borough of Oxford until February of 1866, when Dr. J. F. Rose removed thither from Media, Pa.

Dr. Rose studied medicine with Dr. J. K. Lee, of West Philadelphia, and graduated at the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania in March of 1865. In July of the same year he settled at Media, Pa., and at the death of Dr. Duffield succeeded him at Oxford, Feb. 8th, 1866. The progress of Homoeopathy has been rapid and steady at that place ever since Dr. Smedley first settled there. Dr. Rose writes about it thus: "Homoeopathy, I believe, has a strong hold upon the affection of the people in this section of the country, and if I am able to judge of the number of its new patrons, I think that I can safely say that it is continually advancing. Its progress is not checked by the strong combination existing against it in this vicinity. It spreads, in spite of its numerous enemies, who would crush its very life out, had they the power. But it is so deeply planted and firmly rooted, that even the storms of adversity may blow without materially injuring it."

After Oxford comes Marshalton. Dr. R. P. Mercer located here in the Spring of 1861, having studied medicine with Dr. I. D. Johnson, of Kennet Square, Pa., and graduated at the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania in the same year, 1861. He was successful at Marshalton, and was gathering around him an extensive patronage, when circumstances combined to draw him away to other localities. He removed to Wilmington, January, 1865. Remaining there

but a short time, he changed to Chester, Delaware county, Pa., where he now is.

In 1862 Dr. J. L. Sutton located in Penningtonville; but before he had time to enter into practice to any extent, he was called away by the Providence of God. He died in the latter part of 1862, or the early part of 1863. All that we can gather of the history of Dr. Sutton is, that he removed from Norristown there, having practiced a short time at Unionville. He was about the age of 35 to 38 when he died. He was affable and easy in his address, as a gentleman, but intensely aggressive as a disciple of Hahneman. His medical history I have not been able to obtain. No one has succeeded him.

Dr. F. Marion Hawkins took a stand for Homoeopathy in Jennerville, of this county, about April 1st, 1868. He studied medicine with Jas. D. Warfield, M. D., and Milton Hammond of Baltimore, Md., and graduated at the Eclectic Medical College of Pennsylvania, in January, 1868.

One other name has been mentioned as connected with Homoeopathy in Chester county—that of a Dr. Bradley; but we cannot locate him. More than the mere name is not known.

On the 5th day of October, 1858, the Homoeopathic Medical Society of Chester county, Pa., was organized, by the meeting together of Drs. Duffield, of New London, Hawley, of Phoenixville, Hindman, of Cochranville, Johnston, of Kennet Square, Wood and Jones, of West Chester. It has been in a prosperous condition ever since, having two meetings annually. At first the number of practitioners in the county being limited, it was deemed advisable to combine the interests of Chester, Lancaster and Delaware counties, which was continued until 1866, when the connection with Lancaster county was broken by mutual consent, and now it remains the Homoeopathic Medical Society of Chester and Delaware Counties. The officers for the ten years past have been: Presidents—Drs. Duffield, Johnston, Wood, Hawley,

Stehman, Fanastock, Mercer, Preston, Bardin, Johnston. Its Vice Presidents have been the Presidents of the succeeding year. It has had but one Secretary—Dr. J. E. Jones, the Society having continued his services from year to year. For Treasurer, Drs. Wood, Hawley and Hindman served the first three years, and Dr. R. C. Smedley ever since.

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